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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/542,726	07/20/2005	Minoru Yoshida	050463	8366
23850	7590	01/09/2008		
KRATZ, QUINTOS & HANSON, LLP 1420 K Street, N.W. Suite 400 WASHINGTON, DC 20005			EXAMINER PALO, FRANCIS T	
			ART UNIT 3644	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 01/09/2008	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/542,726

Applicant(s)

YOSHIDA ET AL.

Examiner

Francis T. Palo

Art Unit

3644

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 October 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 4-12 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 20 July 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 7/20/05.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Claims 4-12 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR

1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim.

Applicant timely traversed the election requirement in the reply filed on 10/19/07.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a),
as being unpatentable over **Furusawa** (JP 405284851A) 1993,
in view of **Yoshida** (US 6,237,285) 2001 and
Furukawa (US 5,373,661) 1994.

Regarding **claim-1**:

Furusawa '851 teaches a greening structure (see figures) comprising a plant-cultivable planting portion (4) on a water-reserving portion (7) and laid on a pavement (3) for forming a greening area; Furusawa is silent however as to post-shaped members provided as claimed (substantially consecutively from a portion where an external force loaded on said planting portion is directly received, to the bottom of said water-reserving portion or to said pavement, so that said external force is received on said pavement through said post-shaped members).

Furukawa '661 teaches drainage unit boxes in figures 1-8 for use on a roof (pavement as claimed) and **Yoshida '285** teaches a planting box to be spread over the surface of a roof (col.-1, line-53 thereabout) or artificial ground (Abstract).

It is submitted that since Furusawa '851 which, predates both Furukawa '661 and Yoshida '285, teaches a planting portion (4) on a water-reserving portion (7); it would have been within the technical grasp of one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to have combined the plant cultivation portion (figure-7) of Yoshida '285 with the water drainage portion (figure-5) of Furukawa '661 to effect a greening structure as taught by Furusawa '851, and further to have modified the water drainage portion (figure-5) of Furukawa '661 as taught by Furusawa '851 so as to retain moisture for the plant cultivation portion as taught by Furusawa '851:

as where a claimed improvement on a device or apparatus is no more than "the simple substitution of one known element for another or the mere application of a known technique to a piece of prior art ready for improvement," the claim is unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Ex Parte Smith, 83 USPQ.2d 1509, 1518-19 (BPAI, 2007) (citing KSR v. Teleflex, 127 S.Ct. 1727, 1740, 82 USPQ2d 1385, 1396 (2007)).

Accordingly, applicant claims a combination that only unites old elements with no change in the respective functions of those old elements, and the combination of those elements yields predictable results; absent evidence that the modifications necessary to effect the combination of elements is uniquely challenging or difficult for one of ordinary skill in the art, the claim is unpatentable as obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Ex Parte Smith, 83 USPQ.2d at 1518-19 (BPAI, 2007) (citing KSR, 127 S.Ct. at 1740, 82 USPQ2d at 1396).

Accordingly, since the applicant has submitted no persuasive evidence that the combination of the above elements is uniquely challenging or difficult for one of ordinary skill in the art, the claim is unpatentable as obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) because it is no more than the predictable use of prior art elements according to their established functions resulting in the simple substitution of one known element for another or the mere application of a known technique to a piece of prior art ready for improvement.

Resultantly, the combination of Yoshida '285 and Furukawa '661 as taught by Furusawa '851 would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, and as such the combination would be capable of the force loading recitation as claimed.

Regarding **claim-2**:

The discussion above regarding claim-1 is relied upon.

It is submitted that the combination of Yoshida '285 and Furukawa '661 as modified is readable on, the first post shaped members disposed upwards from the bottom of the planting portion (Yoshida '285; figure-7) and the second post-shaped members (Furukawa '661) disposed downward from the bottom of the planting portion as claimed, as either Yoshida resting on Furukawa or an integration of the two would be readable thereon the disposition of the post-shaped members as claimed.

Regarding **claim-3**:

The discussion above regarding claim-2 is relied upon.

Furukawa '661 teaches receiving holes (125) for the post-shaped members (117) as claimed.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Francis T. Palo whose telephone number is 571-272-6907. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Tu.,Th.-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Teri Luu can be reached on 571-272-7045. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Francis T. Palo

Francis T. Palo
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3644